/83 cont./

3. The Activities of the City

1. Commerce.

433 If we except the period of conquest, during which a handful of troops established themselves in the entrenched camp, the primary function of Thiès was commerce.

441 An escale of trade in its beginnings, Thiès has re-
433 mained that up to our times. Almost 25,000 tons of groundnuts are commercialized each year in spite of the opening of important points of trade in the vicinity, Tivaouane, Khombole, located some 30 kilometers from there. This commerce demands a certain taste for risk; if in certain years it offers appreciable profits, it sometimes renders the balance sheet of the merchants who practice it very precarious. The groundnut trade, as far as purchase from the pro-
[563] ducer is concerned, is almost entirely in the hands of the
[442] Levantines and a few Moors and Blacks. The important establishments, N. O. S. O. C. O. (8) and the Soucail firm,

8. N. O. S. O. C. O. Nouvelle Société Commerciale.

engage only in wholesale trade.

443 The factorerie run by a Levantine (9) next to the

[162] [563] 9. The Levantines are 48 in number, namely, 23 Syrians and 25 Lebanese (figures of 1952).

courtyard of the secco (10) has kept all its picturesqueness

[257] 10. Secco: mass of groundnuts stored in the courtyard of the merchant and destined for export.

[438] up to our day. /84/ Everything is sold there, from the piece of trade cloth in vivid colors to cheap perfume; kerosene by the liter and millet by the kilo or sack are retailed there.

/84 cont./

443 One corner of the plank counter, polished by the hands of
[275] customers, is often reserved for the sale of beverages that are drunk from the bottle itself. Boards and piles of sacks block the passage of the customers. There is a constant coming and going of possible customers who pass the shop fully open to the street. Some stay there for hours without buying, solely to feast their eyes. The patient Levantine,
[437] arguing about the price in the native language, supervises the weights and inspects the sacks of groundnuts in order to take out the stones that may have slipped into them. The factorerie type makes it possible to imagine exactly what the commerce of the escale must have been in the first years of its establishment in the city.

European commerce is totally different. To be sure, there are still some factoreries of the type that we have just described, but for some years a real effort at modernization has changed their appearance; they are becoming metropoli-
[438] tan-type stores with counters of plywood, shelves of canned goods, novelties from Paris... A luxury store was opened in 1950, offering buyers the latest goods from the capital: gowns, shorts, suits for men, curios of all sorts. But the nearness of Dakar, the ease of access to it, its attraction seem to be seriously limiting its sales potential.

442 The branches of the large commercial houses, N.O.
443 S.O.C.O., Maurel and Prom, C.F.A.O. (11), are eight in

11. C.F.A.O.: Compagnie Française d'Afrique Occidentale.

number and practically control the local market. Each is still established in its original concession in the interior of the old escale. The courtyard that formerly held the groundnuts has been remodeled into a warehouse; the retail store has been modernized: tiling, frigidaire, and cold rooms, as well as huge shop windows that replace the small windows of former times. The wholesale store, on the other hand, has preserved its disorder: bags of cement, boards,

/84 cont./

442 443 iron for cement, tires...piled loosely together. The activity of these branches is based on three elements: retail with a sales store open to the average customers, wholesale granted to the important factoreries (Levantines...), and wholesale to the small shopkeepers for retail. Each is furthermore an implement dealer with exclusive right of sale granted to them: frigidaires, motor fuel, automobiles...The figure [433] for the monthly business of one of them fluctuated between 20 and 25 million in 1953.

443 An intermediate type of commerce was established a short time ago with the arrival of the Moroccans; they [563] numbered 25 in 1952. /85/ Some among them attempt to [162] corner both the European and native clientele. They special- [438] ize in the sale of fabrics and fancy articles for Africans: [191] babouches, fezzes, cheap watches. They speak the native language fluently and sometimes French extremely well.

The Africans, as we have seen, have launched into private business since 1920. Some of them have a factorerie of the Levantine type, but most of them have opened a shop in the outlying quarters. The Moors and the Blacks share this small-scale commerce: in 1952 the former reached the figure of 120; the Blacks were perhaps as numerous. They [347] are installed in the small shops of boards or mud roofed with straw or with corrugated metal. On the counter, made up of a simple board, stands a Roberval scale, some jars of large multicolored bonbons, a pasteboard box filled with dry biscuits. The bag of charcoal on the floor stands beside a tin of kerosene. Some cola nuts kept fresh in a wrapping of leaves still green, a kilo of sugar broken open, which is sold by the lump, some packages of cigarettes sold by the unit, and small cans of condensed milk give a glimpse of the small volume of their business.

To complete this picture, let us add the innumerable small "doorstep" merchants who on a piece of cloth or in a calabash display a few handfuls of roasted peanuts and cola nuts, a package of cigarettes, or millet fritters. These small stalls are all located in front of the door of the hut;

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of training. This is one of the essential preoccupations of the present Sengalese government.

II. The "Trade" of Groundnuts

For a century the total volume of production has progressed in spectacular fashion. Actually, no statistics are available at the harvesting stage. Only the commercial figures are known with any accuracy. In any case they differ little from the total figure of production because local consumption seems to be of little importance. It is estimated that the average production of groundnuts from 1900 to 1904 was 123,000 metric tons. The more recent figures are the following: 1938-1939 campaign, 584,000 metric tons; 1942-1943 compaign, 183,000 metric tons; 1943-1944 campaign, 281,000 metric tons; 1957-1958 campaign, 808,000 metric tons; 1958-1959 campaign, 653,000 metric tons; 1959-1960 campaign, 720,000 metric tons.

Except for the period of the war, when the production of groundnuts, difficult to export, decreased to the profit of that of millet, progress was continuous, the 1957-1958 campaign being exceptionally favorable.

This production enters into the circuit of commercialization or "trade," which today is very strictly regulated.

1. The organization of "trade." The commercialization of the groundnut has replaced the "trade" in gum, slaves, and gold of the former colonial system. Although the term is still often used, its present context is very different from the acceptation of the era of the colonial pact. Trade is no longer, as Littré wished it to be, an exchange trade organized almost exclusively for the benefit of the European "trader"; today it is a commercial activity that is strictly regulated as to time and place and open only to approved intermediaries.

1.) The "campaign." "The campaign" is the period

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442 654 438 during which commercial operations in groundnuts are authorized. It is opened and closed each year by governmental decree. In general it begins at the end of November or the beginning of December and closes at the end of April. The date of opening the campaign is set about two months after the beginning of the harvest, in order to avoid premature uprooting and to favor 438 442 the reimbursement of the seed advanced. This system nevertheless leads to some smuggling in the south, because the [439] navétanes, anxious to return home, and the peasants, without any money, are tempted to sell in Gambia. At the time of the close, the transactions have been over for a long time, but this decision prevents the eventual sale /15/ of the seed distributed by the Mutuelles. In order to have the commodity brought in gradually and to avoid heavy transactions at the beginning of trade, operations are suspended from Friday to Monday. Nevertheless by the end of the month of January nearly all of the harvest has been negotiated.

366 442 438 2) The "points of trade." Since 1932 the operations of selling must take place in the localities called points of trade or "escales" located on the railroad or a road (Circular of 13 July 1932). These points of trade, which were 175 in number in 1935, now number more than 300. The limitation, in 1932, on the number of the points of trade was a response to the desire to moderate the rhythm of the selling and to avoid the proliferation of intermediaries. The recent creation of new escales is [244] devoted to the conquest of new lands and is an attempt to avoid the abuses of cultivation on the lands near the former points of trade.

The accession of a locality to the rank of escale makes [369] it legally an urban center, with the obligation of division into lots /lotissement/ and, for the merchants, permanent buildings. The campaign is a period of great animation for the escale. 442 The merchants or traders open their bank of purchase or "factory." 437 Traditionally, intermediaries, or "masters of language," conduct [492] the producer to the factory. The groundnuts, transported by don- [488] keys and in bags loaned by the trader, are weighed and emptied

/15 cont./

442 437 [492] [488] [458] [443] [438] into the secco, an area with a floor of hard earth or cement, closed off by sheet metal. The agriculturalist, paid forthwith, immediately spends the sum received, in settling the sums owed to the trader and in buying from among the manufactured objects of the same factory the most diverse articles: cloth, playthings, articles for bicycles, etc. Thus the same trader realizes two profits in the traditional system.

3) The agents of trade. Until the Second World War, 439 441 442 438 the trade in groundnuts was in the hands of about 3,000 private traders organized in a strict hierarchy. At the top, the trade was controlled by the large import-export houses, especially of Bordeaux origin, Maurel et Prom, Peyrissac, Vézia, etc., to which was added the C. F. A. O. of Marseilles origin, and the S. C. O. A. Franco-Switzerland. These firms, whose central agencies for Senegal are in Dakar, make arrangements for the "banks" and "agencies" in the principal localities, for "factories" in the escales, and for "operations" in the bush. These commercial houses concentrate the purchases of their various traders and provide them with imported products. They are supported during the campaign by the banks of the mother country or their agencies in Senegal.

441 442 438 The independent French merchants, often former employees of the firms, play the role of intermediary /demi-grossiste/ in the escales. /16/ They buy directly from the producers or from the African sub-trader and bag and forward /the product/ to the commercial houses in the shipping ports. They have been very harshly affected by the economic crisis of the 1930's and then [563] by the war, in particular by the mobilization, which facilitated the establishment of many Lebano-Syrian traders.

The treaties of 1919 facilitated the arrival in Africa of [563] these Lebano-Syrians. They devote themselves essentially to commerce, and they have on the whole succeeded, because, living near the autochthons, they have adopted their way of life and are contented with much less than the independent 442 Europeans. During the trade, they are generally commission 443 agents of the firm that they represent. They receive a commis- 438 sion for each metric ton of groundnuts purchased, and sell in

/16 cont./

438 their establishments the manufactured products that the firm
442 delivers to them. They are most often linked with the pro-
[443] ducers by the system of loans that they authorize in cash and
[452] especially in kind during the difficult period of low supplies before the harvest.

The African "sub-traders" most often play the role of
[441] intermediary between the producers and the traders; they very often are transporters and guide the seller to the weighing-machine of a friend.

Since the last war this system has been greatly perturbed by the appearance of new purchasers who more and more compete with the traditional commerce. The local oil-makers
[258] scarcely ever appeal to the large firms. They do business with the traders of the escales, or, more often, they have their
438 own buyers. Since 1952 some pilot co-operatives have made
442 the collection in many escales at little expense; they utilize
474 the personnel and equipment of the S. M. D. R. Moreover, the
656 law of 13 January 1960, creating an "Office de commercialisation agricole" (O. C. A.), has assigned to this body the responsibility of selling the products collected by the co-operatives (Art. 6) and has granted it license to create purchase points for the direct collection of local agricultural products in the sectors where there are as yet no co-operatives (Art. 7). The decree of 20 May 1960, which more precisely relates to the marketing of groundnuts, grants purchasing permits only to organismes stockeurs (O. S.) /storage bodies/, private or co-operative, properly approved by the decision of a Comité régional d'agrément /Regional Committee of Approval/, and to the purchasing posts of the O. C. A. One might ask if these decisions do not constitute a step toward the creation of an "Office de l'arachide" /Office for Groundnuts/, which would have exclusivity of the trade and could normalize a "circuit of groundnuts," now very complex. /Pl. I and II appear here on unnumbered pages./

1 [The Lebano-Syrian traders--Analyst]

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438 442 2. The "circuit" of groundnuts. The purchase of the groundnuts in the escale and storing them in the secco of the trader constitute only one step in the complicated circuit that the groundnuts take from the place of production to the port of exportation or to the oil-factories.

492 438 1) The means of transport. From the place of production to the escale, the groundnuts essentially utilize the traditional modes of transport, donkeys throughout the country and camels in the north. The decree of 4 September 1935 has forbidden the [656] use of trucks. Its aims were to avoid bulky hauls, purchases at [231] a low price at the place of production, and, above all, to encourage local animal-husbandry. This system, however, carries with it grave defects. Most often transport on the back of a donkey is more expensive for the producer than transport by truck because the camel-drivers and donkey-drivers impose their own price on the peasants who do not have animals. Moreover, the transporter guides the seller to a trader whom the seller did not choose. Today, however, more and more derogations are permitted, because in the south, where the groundnut is progressing, the tsetse interdicts animal husbandry, and in the other regions the overworked animals are incapable of doing the transporting at the end of trade. Finally, certain [874] co-operatives which pretend "to collect" and not to buy do send trucks to the places of production.

494 438 From the secco of the trader to the port nearby or to the railroad station, transport is handled by trucks. It is essentially the commercial firms, the traders, or the local oil-makers who use them. There are few professional transporters because the traffic is essentially seasonal. The generally bad [491] condition of the unpaved roads, except for the "Transgambienne" from Dakar to Ziguinchor, causes a rapid wearing-out of equipment, whose amortization is a heavy burden on the budget of the merchants.

497 438 The Dakar--Saint-Louis railroad and especially the Dakar-Niger transport more than 200,000 metric tons of groundnuts

[Text continues on P. 21--Analyst]